



*Cassie Mitchell,
HopeWest
President & CEO*

A Message from Cassie

Time and again, I am reminded that behind every touching story of exceptional care is a dedicated, collective effort. Throughout my years as a nurse and administrator in healthcare, this theme remains steadfast. The lesson of strength in teamwork is one that I find I can never learn too often.

Just the other day, I was moved by a call from a wife, whose lifelong partnership with her husband is truly a love story for the ages. They met as teens, growing together as the best of friends. Their journey, marked by a lifetime of both joy and tribulations, faced its toughest challenge when her husband was diagnosed with cancer.

Not wanting her partner to experience pain at any stage of his battle, her foremost concern was that of his comfort. Through the Palliative and Hospice Care programs, our HopeWest team—a dedicated mix of nurses, CNAs, social workers, counselors, volunteers, and chaplains—came together to provide whole-family care that honored their wishes. And at the end of our conversation, she shared, “He was never in any pain, and I cannot thank you enough for that.”

This family’s experience is an example of what is possible because of your collaboration, caring heart, and generous spirit. When we unite together through compassion, no one faces pain or sorrow alone. Your involvement—be it time, donations, or simply spreading the word—embodies the mission of HopeWest, profoundly changing the experiences of aging, illness, and grief – one family at a time.

Thank you for working alongside us to make each person’s unique story of care and comfort a reality.

Warmly,

Cassie Mitchell
HopeWest President & CEO

“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.”

– Coretta Scott King

The Art of Connection

Ronald's Journey to Hope & Healing



The home of HopeWest hospice patient, Ronald, is a vibrant gallery of outdoor photographs, etched scenes, and painted canvases.

It's a place where art spills from bins, adorns the walls, and scatters across the floor, each piece, striking and full of life, telling a unique story from within his journey. Ronald, with a pencil in hand, draws inspiration from photographs he's taken, transforming the images into stunning drawings that reflect his connection to the world around him.

In his youth, Ronald found that drawing allowed him to communicate with his sister who has learning disabilities. He would sit with her as they spent hours drawing and coloring, discovering that in the midst of silence art helped to overcome verbal barriers and create dialogue through pictures.

When severe back pain eventually became too great for Ronald to sit at his art table, his creative pastimes came to a halt. With no family living close by, the loss of his artwork left him visibly downtrodden. As other health issues arose, Ronald elected to receive hospice care with HopeWest, and his team eagerly went to work easing the life-limiting discomfort keeping him from his hobbies. With pain management tailored specifically to his needs, Ronald's care team soon had him back to the drawing table.



Shortly after joining the hospice program, Ronald reached out with a unique idea for sharing his talents. Thanks to the relationship with his sister, he knew art was a great communication tool, and with renewed energy he felt inspired to give back. Ronald connected with the HopeWest Kids team to create custom coloring and activity pages that can be used in counseling sessions and for special projects at summer camps. These pages are more than just activities; they are tools for healing, helping children navigate through their grief and loss when words are simply not enough.

Ronald's story is one of resilience, creativity, and the power of connection. It's about how, even in the face of life's unexpected turns, one can find new ways to express and share their gifts with the world. With the support of his care team and a new partnership with HopeWest Kids, Ronald has not only been able to reconnect with his passion, but also contribute to a larger story of hope and healing. ❤️💙💜



Hummingbird artwork donated to HopeWest Kids by hospice patient Ronald. This artwork and various other pieces Ronald donated will be used during art therapy for children and teens who have experienced the death of a loved one.

HopeWest Kids Expressing Grief Through Art

When a family is facing a serious illness or the death of a loved one, HopeWest Kids is designed to support children and teens as they explore, understand, and express their personal grief experience.

There's something profoundly therapeutic about putting markers and crayons to paper that offers a sense of control during grief. Our approach through HopeWest Kids involves providing diverse avenues for expression, and one powerful method is through art.

While it might seem simple, providing coloring pages for students to color on can be incredibly impactful. In many cases, when children or teens are struggling to communicate verbally, coloring is a way for them to express themselves and engage in their healing journey.



"We're thrilled to incorporate Ronald's paintings into our efforts. His nature drawings can serve as symbols of hope and resilience."

**- Cori, LPCC,
HopeWest
Youth Counselor**

Philanthropy Corner: A Note from Debbie



Deb Horwitz
Sr. Vice President,
Chief Development
Officer

Hello dear friends—It seems like we just watched the Times Square ball drop, and before we can turn around, it's March. A poignant reminder to enjoy the day, the moment, and the people you love.

But, before we tuck 2023 away completely, I'd like to share a few of the accomplishments your generosity made possible. More than **560 children and teens** across the Western Slope participated in HopeWest Kids Grief programs; there were **530 adults** who found strength and comfort in HopeWest bereavement support groups; **250 palliative care patients** received help as they faced serious illness, and **2000 hospice patients** whose end-of-life medical, emotional, and spiritual needs were tended to by our dedicated care teams. As stunning as these numbers are in and of themselves, **we never lose sight of the fact that behind each number is a family, a story, and a legacy.**

In 2024, the Development Department will continue to raise funds to help sustain the transformational care HopeWest has delivered over our 30-year journey; we will also be launching a new initiative—the **Continuing Education Fund**. We know an organization that supports its employees with opportunities for career growth, in turn, enriches our collective expertise and fosters dedication. This commitment directly translates to higher quality of care and improved experiences for patients and families.

HopeWest cherishes the privilege of thanking each of our donors and volunteers. Yet, there are days when a million thank yous don't feel like enough. Your commitment to be there for your neighbors, friends, and family is extraordinary and truly inspirational.

The word *hospice* in Latin, means both guest and host, illustrating how we take care of each other. As we enter our next 30 years, we invite you into our "home," so together, we can celebrate the community we are so blessed to be part of.

Thanks a million,

Debbie 😊

Double Your Impact We're all Winning!

Did you know some companies match their employees' charitable donations? Make your donation go even further—find out if your employer matches! For more information, call (970) 683-4914.



The Continuing Education Fund is a Pathway to Sustained Excellence

We believe in helping families focus on the truly important moments, those that fill our hearts and endure the test of time. By investing in team members of all disciplines, we know we can better fulfill our mission to change the experience of aging, illness, and grief.

The education fund will allow team members to pursue continued education—including training, certifications, and licensing, building upon our culture of continuous improvement and the opportunity to enhance expertise as best practices in healthcare evolve.

Pursuing Excellence

In Grief Support

Our grief counselors can become certified in specialized therapy methodologies like EMDR or equine-assisted therapy. Alternative therapies like these allow our counselors to tailor their practice to serve children and adults in ways that best fit them.

In Hospice & Palliative Care

HopeWest Nurses and CNAs can attain certifications like the Hospice & Palliative Care certification or the Skin & Wound Management certification; enhancing their nursing skills that are specific to caring for the aging and chronically ill.

In Healthcare Safety

Our Facility Technicians can attend workshops focused on the latest standards of maintaining specialized healthcare systems like medical gas and oxygen, HVAC, or biomedical equipment.



Invest in Excellence

Your gift translates to enriched knowledge and skills.



—\$100—

Pain Management & Palliative Care
Conference registration for
two team members

—\$250—

Medical Gas Maintenance Certification
for two facility technicians

—\$1,000—

Hospice & Palliative Care Certification
for two nurses

By fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation, we are investing in our team members' growth, ultimately enhancing the care and support we provide to our community.



Our ability to make a lasting impact of excellence in the community means involving the community itself. We invite you to join us in empowering excellence by giving today.

In every interaction, whether it's a comforting hand to hold, a gentle word of encouragement, or skilled medical care, our community comes together with unwavering dedication to ensure that no one walks their journey alone.



Remembering the Childhood Bear Cub

In Delta County, a patient receiving memory care experienced a special afternoon with Stephanie, a HopeWest chaplain. Stephanie collaborated with the patient's family to arrange a private viewing of a collection of home videos from the patient's childhood. Among these videos were captivating moments, especially one where the patient had once raised a bear cub! Watching these films on a large TV filled the patient with joy and happy memories.

Car Rides with Guardian Angels

Palliative care patient, Emma Lou, finds immense emotional and social support from her HopeWest Meeker volunteers. "I really rely on them as my guardian angels," she beams.

In addition to nursing visits, her volunteers help her with daily tasks like transportation to physicians' visits for regular blood work, to the store for weekly groceries, and even to the local nursing home to visit her sister and friends.



A Fresh New Do

For Debbie, a haircut volunteer with HopeWest Delta, working with each patient is more than just a routine task; it's a chance to lift someone's spirits. She works collaboratively with the Delta team and families to offer exceptional care for patients in the community.

"I've improved someone's day simply by giving them a haircut," she shares. "By the time I leave, the patient and I have already become friends." This thoughtful layer of care through volunteerism provides comfort, dignity, and a sense of normalcy for those facing end of life challenges.

A Puzzle...or Two!

Cody Hill, HopeWest PACE CNA, goes above and beyond in the care he provides. Sometimes it's as simple as enjoying a puzzle with participants at the PACE Day Center. Working on a challenging puzzle always brings smiles and laughs, not to mention just some special social time bonding.



An Evening Pizza Delivery

A Montrose hospice patient found himself without food one afternoon when the outside source he'd depended on for meals had not arrived. He called HopeWest for help just before the office was set to close for the day.

Brenda, a Montrose Team Assistant, was quick to think on her feet and had pizzas taken immediately to the patient's home, ensuring that he had a warm meal for the evening. And Andrea, the patient's HopeWest social worker, collaborated with the VA to arrange for \$100 to grocery shop for the patient and restock his pantry, ensuring he always has something to eat on reserve.



HopeWest

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HopeWestCO.org

Expert. Innovator. *HopeWest Nurse.*

Join our team and define your career.

"At HopeWest, we hire excellent clinicians who are confident, independent, critical thinkers. If you're a nurse looking to define your career, I hope you'll join us."

- Kirsten, RN, BSN, CHPN



See all open positions and
apply at [HopeWestCO.org](https://www.HopeWestCO.org).

